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ABSTRACT

The New York State Education Department is currently developing an innovative and comprehensive system for teacher certification assessment. One component is the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Performance (ATS-P), a video-based performance assessment for which teachers would prepare and submit a videotape of their instruction for evaluation by permanently certified New York State teachers. The development of the ATS-P is traced, and plans for its future application are discussed. An early feasibility study, conducted by the project developer, National Evaluation Systems, Inc., examined the basic technical issues by videotaping several public school teachers at work. This study indicated that basic video equipment used without special training could make tapes with a high level of quality. In a Phase 2 study, the ability of teachers to produce videotapes was ascertained. A third component of the feasibility study examined the ability of teachers to score videotaped performance consistently. The results of all three studies indicate the feasibility of using videotape recordings in teacher evaluation. Some preliminary policies for administration of the ATS-P have been developed. Although many development activities remain, the ATS-P is on its way to providing a reliable assessment of teacher performance. (Contains 2 references.) (SLD)

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INNOVATIONS IN NEW YORK STATE TEACHER CERTIFICATION TESTING

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Video-Based Teacher Assessment:
Innovations in New York State Teacher Certification Testing

Introduction

The New York State Education Department is currently developing an innovative and comprehensive system for teacher certification assessment. Among the purposes of the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations is the desire to develop an integrated system of meaningful and authentic assessment for teaching certification candidates (The Commissioner's Task Force on the Teaching Profession, 1988; University of the State of New York, Regulations of the Commissioner of Education). Candidates for a provisional New York State teaching certificate will be required to pass two assessments. One is the Liberal Arts and Sciences Test (LAST), which requires candidates to demonstrate conceptual and analytical skills, critical thinking and communication skills, and multicultural awareness. The other is the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Written (ATS-W), which is designed to determine if candidates possess the knowledge and skills of professional practice to teach satisfactorily in New York State public schools. Candidates for a permanent New York State teaching certificate will be required to pass two additional assessments. One is the Content Specialty Test (CST), an assessment of the content knowledge important to the job of a New York State public school teacher. The other is the Assessment of Teaching Skills-Performance (ATS-P), a video-based performance assessment for which teachers would prepare and submit a videotape of their instruction for evaluation by permanently-certified New York State teachers. This paper will explore the development of the ATS-P to date and current plans for the future development and implementation of this assessment.

Initial Research and Development Activities

The New York State Education Department is working with National Evaluation Systems, Inc., of Amherst, Massachusetts to develop the ATS-P. The work to date has been designed to be exploratory in nature, so that many alternative directions for the video-based assessment are being evaluated before final directions for the assessment are determined. The valuable input of many teachers, teacher educators, bias reviewers, and professional teacher associations has been sought and obtained in developmental efforts to date.

An extensive video feasibility study was conducted as part of an early effort to examine the technical and logistical issues associated with teachers producing videotapes of their classroom instruction. This study had several key phases. In Phase 1, an effort was made to examine the basic technical issues involved in preparing videotapes of teaching in actual elementary and secondary public school classrooms. Several public school teacher volunteers, who taught a variety of subjects at a number of grade levels, were videotaped for anywhere from 30 minutes to two hours. Different types of video recording cameras were used and different camera positions (e.g., front, side, and rear of classroom) were experimented with. The results of

this Phase 1 study indicated that by using basic school video equipment and without specialized training in video recording techniques, tapes with a high level of video quality could be produced.

The success of the Phase 1 study led to a Phase 2 study. The goal of the Phase 2 study was to determine if public school teachers, with a written procedures manual, could set up video recording equipment and produce either by themselves or with the assistance of other school personnel, a videotape of approximately 30 minutes of their classroom instruction. A second goal of the Phase 2 study was to find out if teachers could produce videotapes that included both **whole-group** and **non-whole-group** (e.g., cooperative learning, group work with manipulatives, etc.) instructional segments. A third goal of the study was to examine the effect of video camera position (front of classroom versus rear of classroom) on overall impressions of teacher performance. Public school teachers, including elementary and secondary teachers from urban, suburban, and rural settings, participated in the study.

The results of the Phase 2 study provided evidence that public school teachers could produce high quality videotapes of their instruction both by themselves and with the assistance of other school personnel. Some teachers set up their camera lens in a fixed position and taught within the camera angle of view, thus producing a **self-recording**. Other teachers had a colleague or student teacher operate the camera and had them pan the camera to follow the movement of the teacher and the students throughout the classroom (**camera-operator recording**). Teacher videotapes included both whole-group and non-whole-group instruction. While in general the technical quality, in terms of videotape scorability, of the whole-group recordings was better than that of the non-whole-group recordings, it appears possible to draw conclusions about teachers' skills in interacting with students and managing classroom activities from recordings of both whole-group and non-whole-group instruction. In terms of the use of a front-of-class camera placement versus a rear-class camera placement, there were advantages to each. However, it does not appear that the position of the camera affects overall judgments of teacher performance.

The third component of the video feasibility study involved a preliminary effort to determine if a sample of the Phase 2 videotapes could be scored consistently by a group of experienced public school teachers. Toward this end, a preliminary scoring scale was developed based upon the following five ATS-P objectives. These objectives had been previously validated by several hundred certified and practicing New York State public school educators and teacher educators by means of a job analysis survey.

1. *Understand principles and procedures for organizing and implementing lessons and use this knowledge to help learners construct meaning and achieve intended outcomes.*

2. *Understand multiple approaches to instruction and use this knowledge to facilitate learning in various situations.*

3. *Understand how motivational principles and practices can be used to promote student achievement and active engagement in learning.*

4. *Understand how to use a variety of communication modes to promote student learning and to foster a climate of trust and support in the classroom.*

5. *Understand how to structure and manage a classroom to create a climate that fosters a safe and productive learning environment.*

The preliminary scoring scale used in the scoring tryout was a 3-point scale that was part of a focused holistic scoring system. Scorers were asked to provide a single integrated judgment about the overall effectiveness of the videotaped teachers in light of each teacher's performance on the five validated test objectives using the following scale:

3 Excellent teaching performance

2 Satisfactory teaching performance

1 Inadequate teaching performance

Participants in the scoring process were provided with approximately five hours of training in using the preliminary scoring scale, including opportunities to view and discuss their scores in a group setting. They were also provided with an opportunity to independently view and score additional videotapes. The results of the scoring tryout indicated that there was a high degree of consistency in the scores assigned by multiple scorers to the same videotapes of teacher instruction. Using the preliminary 3-point scale, there was near perfect agreement among the scorers in their ratings of videotaped teacher performance.

Videotape Program Summarizing Status of Video-Based Performance Assessment

A videotape presentation has been prepared through the joint efforts of the New York State Education Department and National Evaluation Systems. This program was produced to provide New York State public school educators, teacher educators, test development committees and other important constituent groups with an overview of what a videotape submission by an ATS-P candidate would look like, how a group of experienced public school teachers could be trained to score the videotape submission, and discussions by the scorers on the degree of consistency of the scores that they assign to a videotape using the preliminary focused holistic scoring system. This videotape is an important adjunct to this paper and will be shown as part of the presentation of this paper at the American Educational Research Association annual meeting in April, 1993.

Preliminary Policies for the Administration of the ATS-P

The New York State Education Department and National Evaluation Systems have had some initial discussions on the policies regarding the administration of the ATS-P. These preliminary policies will be reviewed, and revised as needed, based on the input of New York State public school teachers, teacher educators, and a panel of New York State educators who have experience with and are sensitive to, issues of potential bias. Current thinking about the administration of the ATS-P has led to the following general policy recommendations:

- Candidate videotape submissions should not exceed 30 minutes in length, including a minimum of 10 minutes of whole-group instruction and 10 minutes of non-whole-group instruction.

- Candidates will be free to make as many practice videotapes as they desire before selecting the videotape for their official ATS-P submission.

- Candidate videotape submissions will be accompanied by a Context of Classroom Instruction Form, on which they will provide their instructional objectives, descriptions of previous instruction, and some background information on their students. This form may be reviewed by scorers prior to viewing each videotape submission.

- Candidates will be encouraged to use basic school videotape recording equipment, with one camera, a camera tripod, and the built-in camera microphone. No other more elaborate video or sound recording equipment will be permitted. In addition, the videotape selected for submission may not be edited. The purpose of this policy is to attempt to prevent the use of expensive video recording technology by candidates, which might put some candidates at a disadvantage in the quality of their videotape submission.

The above policies may likely be revised as they are reviewed by hundreds of New York State educators involved in the assessment development process.

Future ATS-P Development Activities

Many ATS-P development activities remain. The ATS-P policies and procedures for candidates will undergo careful review and revision. The scoring scale and scoring rubrics will be refined and tested. In addition, extensive pilot testing of the ATS-P with New York State public school teachers will continue. In all of these activities, the overriding goal will be to continue to develop an assessment of teacher performance that will help to ensure that permanently-certified New York State teachers demonstrate a satisfactory level of teaching skills and that the assessment of these skills is reliable and valid.

The New York State Education Department, through the New York State Teacher Certification Examinations, is dedicated to strengthening the standards for admission to the profession of teaching. The Assessment of Teaching Skills-Performance is a bold and innovative component of a comprehensive assessment system. The ATS-P, with continued refinement as it proceeds through a rigorous test development process, may likely serve as a model for performance-based teacher certification assessment programs in the future.

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